
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Kent County Health Department Working with
Pharmacies to Monitor Stock of Flu Medication**

GRAND RAPIDS – Emergency Departments in Kent County reported a slight incline in the percentage of visits due to flu-like illnesses last week. The Kent County Health Department is monitoring the situation with area pharmacies to make sure they are able to meet the demand for flu medication.

“Some pharmacies are reporting to us that they are currently low on dosages of prescription flu medication, mostly the liquid doses for children,” says Cathy Raevisky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Our staff is staying on top of the situation, to determine if the Health Department needs to supplement community supplies.” The Health Department does not fill prescriptions for flu medication to the general public.

The Kent County Health Department says the single best way to protect against the flu is by getting vaccinated, which can take about two weeks to become effective. Regular hand washing also can be helpful in reducing your risk of getting the flu. Even if you haven’t received a vaccination yet, you can still get protected. Physicians tell us that in cases where people have developed the flu after getting the vaccine, the symptoms are less severe. Adults and children with the flu should stay home from school or work until they have been able to keep a normal body temperature for 24 hours, without a fever-reducing medication.

Flu season typically peaks in February/March, but this year, the onset of cases has arrived several weeks early. The confirmed number of flu cases in Kent County this season is 463. Signs and symptoms of flu include fever (or feeling feverish/chills), cough and/or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue (very tired), vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults).

The flu can cause serious complications in pregnant women, people who have weakened immune systems, in the very young and in the elderly. Infants six months of age or younger cannot get a flu vaccine, so it is recommended that family members and people who care for them receive a vaccination. The Health Department has plenty of injection (\$25) and nasal mist (\$32) available. Check out the Kent County Health Department website, <http://www.stickttotheflu.com/> to learn more about flu vaccinations, prevention tips and treatment, or call (616) 632-7200 to make an appointment.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.